

INE-0001C

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A combination needle and ferrule, the needle configured to capture a the ferrule, which is connected to suture material, which is initially spaced from the needle and, which has a minimum internal open dimension, the needle comprising:

a shaft having a diameter;

a tip including a point wherein a diameter at a proximal portion of the point defines a maximum diameter of the tip, and wherein the maximum diameter of the tip is larger than the minimum internal open dimension of the ferrule; and,

a groove near the tip and between the shaft and the tip.

2. (Previously Amended) The combination needle and ferrule of claim 1 wherein the groove comprises a region of the tip tapering proximally towards the shaft, wherein the region has a proximal end diameter less than the diameter of the shaft.

3. (Previously Amended) The combination needle and ferrule of claim 2 further comprising a section between the shaft and the tip, the section tapering distally from the diameter of the shaft to the proximal end diameter of the region of the tip, the section and the region defining the groove.

4. (Previously Amended) The combination needle and ferrule of claim 1 wherein the shaft has a substantially circular cross-section.

5. (Previously Amended) The combination needle and ferrule of claim 1 wherein the shaft of the needle is a length adapted for receipt in a shaft of a tissue suturing apparatus.

6. (Previously Amended) The combination needle and ferrule of claim 1 wherein the shaft of the needle has a distal end adjacent the tip and a proximal end having a spherical member for receipt within a handle member of a tissue suturing apparatus.

7. (Previously Amended) The combination needle and ferrule of claim 1 wherein the point is conically shaped.